



# Fantasy and Realism in Victorian Literature

Dr. E. Haugtvedt, email, office, office hours

Term, Meeting Place, Time, Days

## Course Description

In this class, you will read, discuss, and write about several major works of Victorian literature focusing on the theme “fantasy and realism.” Through this theme, we will explore the historical and cultural concerns of the Victorian period as they manifest in its literature, practicing literary analysis throughout. We will interrogate what “fantasy” and “realism” might have meant for the Victorians, and how these concerns manifest throughout nineteenth-century literature. We will question whether fantasy shades into realism and whether realism shades into fantasy, and what we might get by collapsing these categories. At the end of this course, you will be conversant with the major themes and issues of the Victorian period from social, historical, and cultural perspectives. Most importantly, you will be able to make original interpretive claims about Victorian literary texts.

**Required Texts: You must have access to all assigned readings during class!**

- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (1847)
- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (1860-61)
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (1865)
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde (1891)
- Other short readings available on our course management website

## Class Expectations

### Classroom Community

In this class, we will be regularly discussing and sharing our responses to literature that covers sensitive and controversial topics. It is imperative that you be respectful and courteous to your classmates; any disagreements should be handled constructively.

### Attendance

You are expected to **attend class regularly, engage with course material exclusively during class, and be ready to contribute to classroom discussions and activities.**

Throughout the semester, you are allowed 3 unexcused absences, no questions asked. **Every unexcused absence after 3 will result in the lowering of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.**

Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or university-associated travel, will not affect your grade but you will need to **contact me as soon as possible to make up for any missed work.**

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. You are encouraged to discuss your papers with each other, discuss readings, and go to the Writing Center with your papers, but if you use someone's words or ideas you must provide proper documentation. If you have questions or are at all unclear about what plagiarism is or whether your work constitutes plagiarism, please email me or speak to me. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that can result in zero for the assignment, failure of the course, and/or referral to the committee of academic affairs. This includes both deliberate and accidental plagiarism.

## Resources

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email me or to meet with me during office hours. If my office hours do not work for you, please contact me to make an appointment.

Writing Center: The writing center is located [HERE](#), with these hours. The writing center helps writers at all levels of expertise. Please visit the writing center to improve your writing. Writing Center tutors do not proofread, but they will help you learn how to correct your own mistakes.

Disability Services: If you have a documented disability, please contact Disability Services [HERE](#) for accommodation. Please feel free to discuss your needs with me in private if you would like more information.

## Assignments and Grade Distribution

### Reading Journal, 25% of your final grade

**You will be responsible for writing a 1-page reading journal in response to the assigned reading for every class meeting.** You will select a short passage from the reading based on the thematic questions I post to our class website. You will apply my questions to your passage, interrogating how the passage defines words, how it evokes moods, how it uses imagery, etc. In short, you will observe patterns in the reading and you will interpret those patterns. You will ask how this passage relates to what you have read in the book before and you will project forward, predicting what you think will happen in the rest of the novel. You will ask your own questions about what you're confused about in the novel.

These reading journals will be visually checked daily, and will be randomly collected to be graded 10 times throughout the semester, at unannounced intervals.

### Journal Reflection, 10% of your final grade

You will use your reading journal to document your reactions to and thoughts about the reading throughout the semester. Near the end of the semester, you will look back on your reading journal and choose two entries on *Jane Eyre*, OR *Great Expectations*, OR *Alice in Wonderland* to reflect upon again. Have your thoughts changed about what you wrote back then? Has your interpretation changed? Choose two of your strongest entries to compare as potential topics for your literary analysis paper; during an in-class peer exercise, you will partner with a classmate to help each other choose the most viable analysis topic for your papers.

### Literary Analysis Paper Draft, 5-7 pages, 20% of your final grade

This short essay consists of three parts: You will choose a short passage from your reading journal on *Jane Eyre*, *Great Expectations*, or *Alice in Wonderland*. You will then write a 5-7 page paper, double-spaced in 12 pt. font, that analyzes that passage in detail. You will create an analytical thesis about the passage, focusing on the literary techniques of the passage and larger related patterns that occur in the rest of the novel. You will NOT use any secondary sources. This is just about you interpreting the novel yourself. This paper will later be revised into your final 8-10 page paper.

### Writing Conference, 10% of your final grade

After you complete your 5-7 page literary analysis, you will meet with me individually to discuss your progress in this class and your analytical work on the final paper. We will particularly focus on how to expand and deepen your analytical claims from your 5-7 page paper to your revised 8-10 page final paper.

## Literary Analysis Paper Revision, 8-10 pages, 30% of your final grade

Based on our discussion during our writing conference and my comments on your 5-7 page literary analysis paper, you will revise and expand your 5-7 page paper into an 8-10 page final literary analysis paper.

## Participation, 5% of your final grade

This course will be a combination of lecture and discussion. There will be many opportunities for class discussion and your participation. If you are not here, you are not participating. Your participation grade reflects the quality and thoughtfulness of your consistent contributions to class, the respect you show to your fellow class members, and your attitude and role in small group exercises. **To earn full credit for participation, you must come to my office hours at least once per semester with a question.** If you cannot make my regular hours, we can schedule another meeting time.

## Course Schedule

Date	Readings Due	Assignments Due
<b>Week 1</b>	Realism and Fantasy: Background & Theory	
	Norton Introduction to the Victorian Period; Anderson, Introduction to <i>Imagined Communities</i> (on class website)	Reading Journal due every day for which there is assigned reading
	Excerpts from Jakobson, "Realism in Art" (1922) and Todorov, <i>The Fantastic</i> (1975) (on class website)	
<b>Week 2</b>	Conditions in London	
	Excerpts from <i>Sketches by Boz</i> by Dickens (1836)	
	Mayhew, excerpt from <i>London Labor and the London Poor</i> (1851); Barrett Browning, "The Cry of the Children" (1850)	
<b>Week 3</b>	The Past as Fairy Tale; The Woman Question	
	Gaskell, "The Old Nurse's Story" (1852)	
	Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott" and "Goblin Market" (1862)	
<b>Week 4</b>	<i>Jane Eyre</i> : The Bildungsroman and the gothic	
	Be ready to discuss reading questions posted to class website for each class	
<b>Week 5</b>	<i>Jane Eyre</i>	

	Is <i>Jane Eyre</i> supernatural?	
<b>Week 6</b>	<i>Great Expectations</i> : Bildungsroman reversed?	
	Be ready to discuss reading questions posted to class website for each class	
<b>Week 7</b>	<i>Great Expectations</i>	
	What's going on with those two endings?	
<b>Week 8</b>	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> : Victorian Fantasy	
	Read also: Excerpt from Prickett, <i>Victorian Fantasy</i>	
	Be ready to discuss reading questions posted to class website for each class	
<b>Week 9</b>	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	
	Mathematics, science, nonsense	
<b>Week 10</b>	Choosing a Literary Analysis Topic	
	Reviewing and Reflecting on Journal Responses	
	Peer Activity: Choosing a Topic	Journal Reflection due
<b>Week 11</b>	Analyzing Literature	
	Pushing our observations to claims; developing an analytical thesis	
	Peer Review	5-7 pg Literary Analysis due
<b>Week 12</b>	The Late Victorians: Science Fiction and Crime	
	Stevenson, <i>The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (1886)	
	<i>Jekyll and Hyde</i> cont.	
<b>Week 13</b>	The Late Victorians: Detective Fiction	Writing Conferences
	Conan Doyle, "The Speckled Band" (1892)	
	Continue to discuss Sherlock Holmes	

<b>Week 14</b>	The Late Victorians, Aestheticism and the Gothic	Writing Conferences
	Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (1891)	
<b>Week 15</b>	<i>Dorian Gray</i> continued	
	Review of the semester	
<b>Week 16</b>	Review and Wrapping Up	
	Peer Review Workshop	
	Evaluations	8-10 pg Literary Analysis due